Local lifesavers receive recognition

BY KAY FATE
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It's a remarkably clear — and riveting — 90 seconds of video.

In it, Officer Jeffery Stobbs and Sgt. Brad Anderson can be seen first talking to the man, then approaching him quickly and pulling him to the ground.

All in a day's work for Rochester Police officers, typically, but this particular exchange occurred at 2 a.m. on a snowy, frigid night at the edge of the top floor of a parking ramp. The man was threatening suicide.

What the viewer doesn't see is the hour that came before, as Stobbs and Anderson negotiated with the man, who was often hanging over the edge of the railing. With the negotiations making little progress, Stobbs offered a cigarette to the man to distract him. As the man struggled to light the cigarette, the officers moved in, grabbed him and pulled him to safety.

For their actions that night last winter, Stobbs and Anderson on Wednesday received the department's Lifesaving Award.

The semiannual ceremony honors employees and citizens who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to keep the community safe.

After showing the video of the rooftop rescue — captured by a security camera atop the structure — Chief Roger Peterson made the presentation, two of 10 Lifesaving Awards given during the program.

"It's one of the best things you can do during your day," he said.

Also featured during the event was another video, this one from a squad car. It was recorded the night of Jan. 14 when a fire broke out in an eight-unit apartment complex at 2040 8 1/2 St. S.E.

The flames on the dashboard camera are visible as the officer pulls into the parking lot, but the heart of the video is the audio, which catches the rescue efforts of officers Aaron Penning and Shamus Ryan. Together, they were able to save a woman and five children from the building.

"That's what it sounds like to be running toward a fire when everyone else is running away," Peterson said.

Officer Josh Thompson received the department's Letter of Recognition, presented for his "persistence, initiative and attention to detail" that led to the removal of four handguns from Rochester streets in a six-month period. Each of the weapons was in the hands of convicted felons, Peterson said.

Winners

Citizen Lifesaving Award:
Sherry Thornburg
Bob Nelson

Department Letter of Recognition:
Officer Josh Thompson

Department Lifesaving Award:
Officer Joe Mayerle
Officer Jeffery Stobbs
Sgt. Brad Anderson
Officer Travis Riggott (8th award)
Officer Aaron Penning
Officer Shamus Ryan
Officer Paul Gronholz (2nd award)
Sgt. Steve Thompson (4th award)

Department Commendation Award:
Sgt. Frank Ohm (2nd commendation)
Sgt. Matt Krambeck (2nd commendation)
Officer Lynne Lowney
Allison Stone
Officer Joel Blahnik (4th commendation)
Officer Josh Laber
Officer Tracy Nepper
Officer Bert Otto
Officer Mark Peterson
Sgt. Paul Wilson
Officer Anthony Heaser (member of Owatonna Police Dept.)
Chad Blanchette (2nd commendation)
Jared Pankratz (2nd commendation)
Sarah Clayton
Tonya Klees
Officer Greg Jeardeau
Officer Carrie Koehler
Officer Greg Marx
Capt. John Sherwin (3rd commendation)

Elizabeth Nida Obert / enida@postbulletin.com

Rochester Police Chief Roger Peterson, right, presents a Police Lifesaving Award to Sgt. Brad Anderson, left, and Officer Jeffery Stobbs, center, on Wednesday at the Rochester Police Department Awards Ceremony.

Kellogg celebrates its 50th anniversary

BY MATTHEW STOLLE
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When Carl Zander thinks about his years at then-Kellogg Junior High, the retired teacher recalls a kind of Golden Age.

"We had just such a beautiful location," said Zander, 85, who started working there when the school opened in 1962. "We had an excellent staff."

Such memories, multiplied by hundreds of retired and current school employees and students, are fueling a celebration of the Rochester middle school, which is marking its 50th anniversary. The festivities begin May 17 with a private reunion staff dinner from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The public portion of the party begins at 6:30 p.m. A band will be playing in the front patio, and a museum of all things Kellogg will be on display inside.

"It started out as cake and punch, and it's turned into this monster celebration," said Kellogg science teacher Bruce Rodgers, who estimates that 100 retired Kellogg teachers plan to attend the bash. "It's really quite remarkable — the excitement and enthusiasm that's being generated about this thing."

Construction of the school started in 1961, and it opened in 1962 — a year in which John F. Kennedy was president, John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth, and Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love" was a No. 1 song.

Kellogg was built in what was considered the boonies, as Rochester was considerably smaller then. None of the subdivisions that now surround the school were there. It was the first school built as a junior high in Rochester, and it was sign of impending growth, as the opening of IBM in the late 1950s foreshadowed a population boom.

Rodgers said what has made Kellogg special is the people. Many teachers, once they arrived at Kellogg, never left. Those who did move on became leaders in the district and the city.

"If you look at our principals and assistant principals, they have all gone on to do even bigger and better things," Rodgers said.

The school's architecture also was distinctive. Unlike many of the square school buildings that predominated then, Kellogg had a long, narrow design. You could get from one end of the building to the other quickly. And when you stick your head out the door, you see both ends of the building and every student in the hallway.

"It's got a real homey feel," Rodgers said.

Not that the school didn't have its warts, Zander said. District leaders cut corners to save money when the school was built. They put in two gyms but provided no seating — just bare walls. The swimming pool was small. And the stage, built next in the lunchroom, was so small "you could put two cows and a horse there, and that was about it."

But those things only made the school more enduring.

Zander says he still meets once per week with about 10 to 15 retired Kellogg employees and teachers at Arby's in northwest Rochester.

"We chew the fat and just have a ball," he said. "Those years were just fun."

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